

C. APPLICANT'S COMMENTS

Claims 1, 2, 4-12, 14-20 are pending in this Application, with Claims 1, 3-5, 7-11, 13-15, 17-20 being amended. No new matter is added by way of these amendments, and the amendments are supported throughout the Specification and the drawings. Reconsideration of Claims 1, 2, 4-12, 14-20 is respectfully requested. The Examiner's rejections will be considered in the order of their occurrence in the Official Action.

Paragraphs 1-2 of the Official Action

The Official Action rejected Claims 1, 2, 11, 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwamoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,666,784) in view of Stevenson (U.S. Patent No. 5,167,289).

In proceedings before the United States Patent and Trademark Office, the Examiner bears the burden of establishing a prima facie case of obviousness based upon the prior art. *In re Bell*, 26 USPQ2d 1529, 1530 (Fed. Cir. 1993). *In re Oetiker*, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1444 (Fed. Cir. 1992). When references cited by the Examiner fail to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, the rejection is improper and will be overturned upon appeal. *In re Fine*, 5 USPQ2d 1596, 1598 (Fed. Cir. 1988). "To support the conclusion that the claimed invention is directed to obvious subject matter, either the references must expressly or impliedly suggest the claimed invention or the examiner must present a convincing line of reasoning as to why the artisan would have found the claimed invention to have been obvious in light of the teachings of the references." *Ex parte Clapp*, 227 USPQ 972, 973 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1985).

"To establish a prima facie case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met." MPEP §706.02(j). First, there must be some **suggestion or motivation**, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a **reasonable expectation of success**. Finally, the prior art reference (or

references when combined) **must teach or suggest all the claim limitations**. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art and not based on applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

The law regarding *obviousness* is clear -- any modification of the prior art must be suggested or motivated by the prior art. It is submitted that combining elements from different prior art references (in an attempt to establish obviousness) must be motivated or suggested by the prior art.

'Obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching or suggestion supporting the combination. Under section 103, teachings of references can be combined only if there is some suggestion or incentive to do so.' [citation omitted] Although couched in terms of combined teachings found in the prior art, the same inquiry must be carried out in the context of a purported obvious "modification" of the prior art. The mere fact that the prior art may be modified in the manner suggested by the Examiner does not make the modification obvious unless the prior art suggested the desirability of the modification.

In re Fritch, 972 F.2d 1260; 23 USPQ2d 1780, 1783-84 (Fed. Cir. 1992), (in part quoting from *ACS Hospital Systems, Inc. v. Montefiore Hospital*, 732 F.2d 1572, 1577; 221 USPQ 929, 933 (Fed. Cir. 1984)).

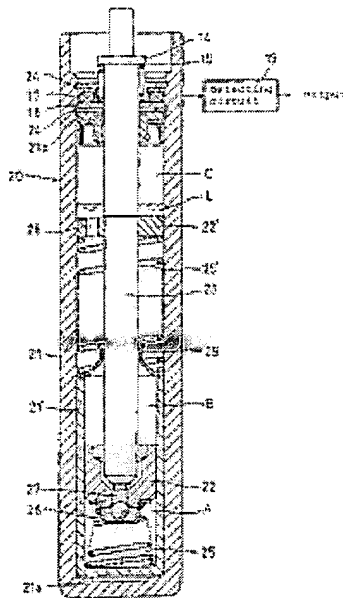
It is also submitted that the mere fact that one may argue that the prior art is capable of being modified to achieve a claimed structure does not by itself make the claimed structure obvious -- there must be a motivation provided by the prior art.

The examiner finds the claimed shape would have been obvious urging that (our emphasis) "it is obvious for one skilled in the art to form each hook base of any desired shape *** since *this is within the capabilities of such a person.*" Thus, the examiner equates that which is within the capabilities of one skilled in the art with obviousness. Such is not the law. There is nothing in the statutes or the case law which makes "that which is within the capabilities of one skilled in the art" synonymous with obviousness.

The examiner provides no reason why, absent the instant disclosure, one of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to change the shape of the coil hooks of Hancock or the German patent and we can conceive of no reason.

Ex parte Gerlach and Woerner, 212 USPQ 471 (PTO Bd. App. 1980) (emphasis in original).

Iwamoto teaches a "piston rod piston detector, autotensioner and belt tension adjuster" that is utilized for a gasoline motor and its corresponding piston rods.



U.S. Patent No. 6,666,784

Iwamoto is not for use measuring the extension of a hydraulic cylinder as the present invention discloses and claims. Iwamoto is therefore non-analogous to the present invention as one skilled in the art of hydraulic cylinders would not have knowledge of Iwamoto, much less combine Iwamoto with Stevenson. In addition, Iwamoto does not teach all of the features of independent Claims 1, 11, 20 by itself or even in combination with Stevenson as admitted in the Office Action.


For these reasons, among others, the combination of Iwamoto with Stevenson cannot suggest the combination of features in applicant's Claims 1, 2, 11, 12, particularly as the same are now amended, and it is therefore submitted that the

rejection against these claims should be withdrawn and Claims 1, 2, 4-12, 14-20 allowed.

D. CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, early reconsideration and allowance of this application are most courteously solicited. Should the Examiner consider necessary or desirable any formal changes anywhere in the specification, claims and/or drawing, then it is respectfully asked that such changes be made by Examiner's Amendment, if the Examiner feels this would facilitate passage of the case to issuance. Alternatively should the Examiner feel that a personal discussion might be helpful in advancing this case to allowance, they are invited to telephone the undersigned.

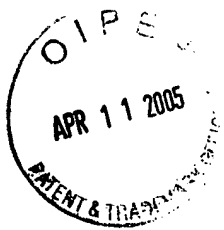
Respectfully submitted,



Michael S. Neustel (Reg. No. 41,221)
NEUSTEL LAW OFFICES, LTD
2534 South University Drive, Suite No. 4
Fargo, North Dakota 58103

4-7-05
Date

Telephone: (701) 281-8822
Facsimile: (701) 237-0544
e-mail: michael@neustel.com



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on April 7, 2005.


MaKell Baumgartner

NEUSTEL LAW OFFICES, LTD
2534 South University Drive, Suite No. 4
Fargo, North Dakota 58103

Telephone: (701) 281-8822
Facsimile: (701) 237-0544
e-mail: michael@neustel.com